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MELVIN L. BERMAN

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MELVIN L. BERMAN, an individual,

Plaintiff,

v.

VOLKSWAGEN GROUP OF AMERICA,
INC., a New Jersey Corporation; and DOES 1
through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 2:22-cv-03304-DMG-SK

STIPULATED PROTECTIVE ORDER

STIPULATION

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED by and between Plaintiff Melvin L. Berman (“Plaintiff”) and Defendant Volkswagen Group of America, Inc. (“VWGoA” or “Defendant”) (collectively, the “Parties”), through their respective attorneys of record, that a Protective Order (“Order” or “Stipulated Protective Order” may be entered by the Court in this Action as follows:

1. **A. PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS**

Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends only to the limited information or items that are entitled to confidential treatment under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth in Section 12.3 (Filing Protected Material), below, that this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to a file confidential information under seal; Civil Local Rule 79-5 sets forth the procedures that must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a party seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.

B. GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

This action is likely to involve trade secrets, customer and pricing lists, and other valuable research, development, commercial, financial, technical and/or proprietary information for which special protection from public disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecution of this action is warranted. Such confidential and proprietary materials and information consist of, among other things, confidential business or financial information, information regarding confidential business practices, or other confidential research, development, or commercial information (including information implicating privacy rights of third parties), information otherwise generally unavailable to the public, or which may be privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure under state or federal statutes, court rules, case decisions, or common law.

Accordingly, to expedite the flow of information, to facilitate the prompt resolution of disputes over confidentiality of discovery materials, to adequately protect information the parties are entitled to keep confidential, to ensure that the parties are permitted reasonable necessary uses of such material in preparation for and in the conduct of trial, to address their handling at the end of the litigation, and serve the ends of justice, a protective order for such information is justified in this matter. It is the intent of the parties that information will not be designated as confidential for tactical reasons and that nothing be so designated without a good faith belief that it has been maintained in a confidential, non-public manner, and there is good cause why it should not be part of the public record of this case.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Action: *Melvin L. Berman v. Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.*, United States District Court, Central District of California, 2:22-cv-03304-DMG-SK.

2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the designation of information or items under this Order.

2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of how it is generated, stored, or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in the Good Cause Statement.

2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as their support staff).

2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as “CONFIDENTIAL.”

2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including, among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced or generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter.

2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action.

1 2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action. House
2 Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside counsel.

3 2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal
4 entity not named as a Party to this action.

5 2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a party to this
6 Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and have appeared in this
7 Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm which has appeared on behalf of
8 that party, including support staff.

9 2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors, employees,
10 consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and their support staffs).

11 2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or Discovery
12 Material in this Action.

13 2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation support services
14 (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or demonstrations, and
15 organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium) and their employees and
16 subcontractors.

17 2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is designated as
18 “CONFIDENTIAL.”

19 2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery Material from a
20 Producing Party.

21 3. SCOPE

22 The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only Protected Material
23 (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or extracted from Protected Material; (2)
24 all copies, excerpts, summaries, or compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony,
25 conversations, or presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material.

26 Any use of Protected Material at trial shall be governed by the orders of the trial judge.
27 This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial.
28

1 4. DURATION

2 Even after final disposition of this litigation, the confidentiality obligations imposed by
3 this Order shall remain in effect until a Designating Party agrees otherwise in writing or a court
4 order otherwise directs. Final disposition shall be deemed to be the later of (1) dismissal of all
5 claims and defenses in this Action, with or without prejudice; and (2) final judgment herein after
6 the completion and exhaustion of all appeals, rehearings, remands, trials, or reviews of this Action,
7 including the time limits for filing any motions or applications for extension of time pursuant to
8 applicable law.

9 5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

10 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection.

11 Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under this Order must
12 take care to limit any such designation to specific material that qualifies under the appropriate
13 standards. The Designating Party must designate for protection only those parts of material,
14 documents, items, or oral or written communications that qualify so that other portions of the
15 material, documents, items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept
16 unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order.

17 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations that are
18 shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper purpose (e.g., to
19 unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to impose unnecessary expenses and
20 burdens on other parties) may expose the Designating Party to sanctions.

21 If it comes to a Designating Party's attention that information or items that it designated for
22 protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must promptly notify all other
23 Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation.

24 5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in this Order
25 (see, e.g., second paragraph of Section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise stipulated or ordered,
26 Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection under this Order must be clearly so
27 designated before the material is disclosed or produced.

1 Designation in conformity with this Order requires:

2 (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic documents, but
3 excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial proceedings), that the Producing Party
4 affix at a minimum, the legend “CONFIDENTIAL” (hereinafter “CONFIDENTIAL legend”), to
5 each page that contains protected material. If only a portion or portions of the material on a page
6 qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s)
7 (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

8 A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for inspection need
9 not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has indicated which documents
10 it would like copied and produced. During the inspection and before the designation, all of the
11 material made available for inspection shall be deemed “CONFIDENTIAL.” After the inspecting
12 Party has identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must
13 determine which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this Order. Then,
14 before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must affix the “CONFIDENTIAL
15 legend” to each page that contains Protected Material. If only a portion or portions of the material
16 on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected
17 portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate markings in the margins).

18 (b) for testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party identify the
19 Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close of the deposition all protected
20 testimony.

21 (c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for any other
22 tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the exterior of the container
23 or containers in which the information is stored the legend “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion
24 or portions of the information warrants protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable,
25 shall identify the protected portion(s).

26 5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent failure to
27 designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive the Designating Party’s
28 right to secure protection under this Order for such material. Upon timely correction of a

1 designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable efforts to assure that the material is treated
2 in accordance with the provisions of this Order.

3 6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

4 6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a designation of
5 confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court's Scheduling Order.

6 6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party Shall initiate the dispute resolution
7 process under Civil Local Rule 37-1 et seq.

8 6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding shall be on the
9 Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper purpose (e.g., to harass
10 or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties), may expose the Challenging Party
11 to sanctions. Unless the Designating Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality
12 designation, all parties shall continue to afford the material in question the level of protection
13 to which it is entitled under the Producing Party's designation until the Court rules on the
14 challenge.

15 7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

16 7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is disclosed
17 or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this Action only for
18 prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Such Protected Material may be
19 disclosed only to the categories of persons and under the conditions described in this Order.
20 When the Action has been terminated, a Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of
21 Section 13 below (FINAL DISPOSITION).

22 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a location
23 and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons authorized under this
24 Order.

25 7.2 Disclosure of "CONFIDENTIAL" Information or Items. Unless otherwise ordered
26 by the Court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a Receiving Party may disclose any
27 information or item designated "CONFIDENTIAL" only to:

28 (a) the Receiving Party's Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as well as

1 employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably necessary to disclose the
2 information for this Action;

3 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of the
4 Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action;

5 (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is
6 reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement
7 to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

8 (d) the Court and its personnel;

9 (e) court reporters and their staff;

10 (f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional Vendors to
11 whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the
12 “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A);

13 (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a custodian
14 or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information;

15 (h) during their depositions, witnesses, and attorneys for witnesses, in the Action to
16 whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing party requests that the witness
17 sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they will not be permitted to keep any
18 confidential information unless they sign the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound”
19 (Exhibit A), unless otherwise agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the Court. Pages of
20 transcribed deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may be
21 separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except as permitted
22 under this Stipulated Protective Order; and

23 (i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, mutually
24 agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions.

25 8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED IN OTHER
26 LITIGATION

27 If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation that compels
28 disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party

1 must:

2 (a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification shall include
3 a copy of the subpoena or court order;

4 (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order to issue in
5 the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the subpoena or order is subject to
6 this Protective Order. Such notification shall include a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order;
7 and

8 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be pursued by the
9 Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected.

10 If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with the subpoena
11 or court order shall not produce any information designated in this action as “CONFIDENTIAL”
12 before a determination by the court from which the subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has
13 obtained the Designating Party’s permission. The Designating Party shall bear the burden and
14 expense of seeking protection in that court of its confidential material, and nothing in these
15 provisions should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action to
16 disobey a lawful directive from another court.

17 9. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE PRODUCED IN THIS
18 LITIGATION

19 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a Non-Party in
20 this Action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Such information produced by Non-Parties in
21 connection with this litigation is protected by the remedies and relief provided by this Order.
22 Nothing in these provisions should be construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking
23 additional protections.

24 (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to produce a
25 Non-Party’s confidential information in its possession, and the Party is subject to an agreement
26 with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party’s confidential information, then the Party shall:

27 (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party that some
28 or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality agreement with a Non-Party;

(2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and

(3) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party, if requested.

(c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this Court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party shall not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the Court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party shall bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this Court of its Protected Material.

10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in writing the Designating Party of the unauthorized disclosures, (b) use its best efforts to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL

When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify whatever procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure of a

1 communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or work product
2 protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the stipulated protective order submitted
3 to the Court.

4 12. MISCELLANEOUS

5 12.1 Right to Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any person to seek its
6 modification by the Court in the future.

7 12.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By stipulating to the entry of this Protective
8 Order, no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to disclosing or producing any
9 information or item on any ground not addressed in this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly,
10 no Party waives any right to object on any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered
11 by this Protective Order.

12 12.3 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any Protected
13 Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5. Protected Material may only be filed under
14 seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the specific Protected Material at issue. If
15 a Party's request to file Protected Material under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving
16 Party may file the information in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court.

17 13. FINAL DISPOSITION

18 After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in Section 4 (DURATION), within 60
19 days of a written request by the Designating Party, each Receiving Party must return all Protected
20 Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As used in this subdivision, "all
21 Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries, and any other format
22 reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned
23 or destroyed, the Receiving Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and,
24 if not the same person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that (1) identifies
25 (by category, where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was returned or destroyed; and (2)
26 affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any copies, abstracts, compilations, summaries,
27 or any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this
28 provision, Counsel are entitled to retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial,

1 deposition, and hearing transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition and trial
2 exhibits, expert reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert work product, even if
3 such materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival copies that contain or constitute
4 Protected Material remain subject to this Protective Order as set forth in Section 4 (DURATION).

5 14. Any violation of this Order may be punished by any and all appropriate measures
6 including, without limitation, contempt proceedings and/or monetary sanctions.
7

8 IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.
9

10 DATED: December 5, 2022
11

12 /s/ Alastair F. Hamblin

13 Attorneys for Plaintiff Melvin L. Berman
14

15 DATED: December 6, 2022
16

17 /s/ Yamili F. Gonzalez

18 Attorneys for Defendant Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.
19

20 FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, IT IS SO ORDERED.
21

22 DATED: December 7, 2022

23 
24

25 Honorable Steve Kim
26 United States Magistrate Judge
27
28

EXHIBIT A

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

I, _____ [print or type full name], of _____
[print or type full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety and understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United States District Court for the Central District of California on [date] in the case of _____ [*Melvin L. Berman v. Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.*, 2:22-cv-03304-DMG-SK]. I agree to comply with and to be bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, and I understand and acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and punishment in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in any manner any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective Order to any person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this Order.

I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after termination of this action. I hereby appoint _____ [print or type full name] of _____ [print or type full address and telephone number] as my California agent for service of process in connection with this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective Order.

Date: _____

City and State where sworn and signed: _____

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____